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OKC - 2600
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21 November 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR : Chief, Development Branch, DPD-DD/P
SUBJECT : Control of Test Aircraft, OKCART

1. It is essential that aircraft being used for test purposes be under the direct control of the responsible engineering test agency. While I have previously recommended that the control of test aircraft be assigned to the R&D Field Office [redacted] this is only one of three possibilities. The other two are, obviously, LAC or the Base Commander. In the case of the first two aircraft, the test requirements of full time utilization dictate that no one but the test team of LAC personnel have control, under the monitoring of the R&D Field Office. In the case of number four and following aircraft, our primary test function will be development of the reconnaissance sub-systems. These aircraft will also be utilized for aircrew training. It is my contention, based on extensive historical experience, that for most effective and rapid system development, the testing requirement must have priority and, to assure this, control of the test aircraft must be given to the Agency responsible for system development. It is not considered that all six aircraft will be utilized full time for test purposes but that portion of this group which can be used to advantage to expedite development should be so used. Pilots for these test missions will of course be provided by the Base Commander, regardless of the assignment of test responsibility.

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2. The three possible courses available which will meet the requirement of assignment of aircraft control with responsibility are:

(a) Give LAC supervisory engineering responsibility for reconnaissance and other sub-systems test, with scheduling authority for aircraft as required.

(b) Give the DPD Field Office the supervisory engineering responsibility for payload sub-system test and commensurate scheduling authority.

(c) Give the Base Commander the supervisory engineering responsibility for payload sub-system test as well as aircrew training responsibility. Provide him with staff members

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which will enable him to discharge the test responsibility and charge him to give priority to testing.

3. In every case of system development I have observed, engineering testing has virtually come to a standstill when the aircraft were turned over to the using command. The pressure to complete transition and operational training subjugates the remaining test requirements. As a result, systems have been put into operational status without adequate operational capability. While I do not advocate testing equipment to death or holding up a program due to minor failures, at least a minimum operational capability must be achieved prior to operational control of all test vehicles.

4. My conclusions are, that for most effective sub-system and over-all system development, the R&D Field Office is the most logical for assignment of test responsibility and test aircraft control would most suitably placed therein. Payload scheduling only will not suffice for test purposes. Further discussion is recommended.

SIGNED



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